



Joint IITA/WARDA Report to ExCo 10

Response to Main Decisions/Conclusions on
WCA Arrangements: SSA Task Forces Follow-Up

April 2006

This joint IITA/WARDA progress report responds to the decisions on monitoring of the implementation of SSA Task Forces recommendations, taken during the Business Meeting of the CGIAR Annual General Meeting (AGM05) in Marrakech, Morocco, 7 – 8 December 2005. IITA and WARDA were asked as the concerned Centers in West and Central Africa to report to each face-to-face meeting of the CGIAR ExCo on progress in implementing the CGIAR decisions on WCA arrangements, which call for programmatic, corporate services and structural/governance alignment. This report highlights progress in the implementation of a number of initiatives proposed to address these ends, at the Joint Executive Committee meeting of the Boards of both Centers held in Paris on October 1, 2005.

Structural/Governance Alignment

- **A series of consultative meetings have been held between IITA and WARDA:**

- Penang in May 2005
- Canada in July 2005
- Washington DC in September 2005 at the invitation of the Chair and Director of the CGIAR
- Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of IITA and WARDA Boards in Paris in October 2005
- 2nd Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of IITA and WARDA Boards is planned for August 2006

- **Concrete achievements in structural/governance alignment are as follows:**

i) A Joint IITA/WARDA Board Nominating Committee has been established. The committee met informally in Dar es Salaam in February and formally in Cotonou, Benin, during the March 2006 WARDA Board meeting to develop its terms of reference and rules of operation. The committee has begun to function in the selection of common Board members.

ii) Common Board Membership is being pursued. However, since Common Board Members need to meet the competency gaps of both centers, the likely scenario is that future Common Board Members will be appointed as Board vacancies occur and in keeping with the respective policies and bylaws. The Joint Nominating Committee has begun the process of reviewing vacancies and competency gaps and expects to have common board members in place by January 2007. WARDA has three vacancies on its Board and intends to fill two of them from existing IITA Board members. One IITA Board member has been identified by WARDA as a CG nominee and the second one is under consideration by the WARDA Board.

iii) The appointment of Common Board Members is not expected to increase the size of either of the two Boards. IITA will maintain its Board size at 12, which has been reduced from 17 over the past two years and WARDA intends to maintain a minimum Board size.

iv) Until the common members are appointed, the two centers have identified two existing Board members to serve as observers at each center's Board meetings. Two Africa Rice Center (WARDA) Trustees have participated in the IITA Board Meeting of 1 to 4 February 2006 and two IITA Trustees participated in the Africa Rice Center (WARDA) Board meeting, 19 to 24 March, 2006.

v) Synchronization of IITA/WARDA Board meetings is being done and a joint meeting of the two Boards has been proposed for early 2007. In the meantime, the second joint Executive Committee is planned for August 2006.

Programmatic Alignment

In response to AGM05 recommendations regarding the SSA Task Forces report, below is the progress made on the WCA MTP:

In 2005 a mechanism was put in place by WARDA as the lead Center in steering this process. That mechanism solicited the support of all Centers operating in West Africa and their relevant partners. To date 11 centers have consistently engaged in the development of the WCA MTP through consultative meetings. The same mechanism has provided for an arrangement for strong collaboration with CORAF/WECARD, FARA and the ESA MTP. The following have been realized.

A Framework for integration in WCA that comprises five components:

- Integrated research programs
- Aligned research programs
- Platforms and institutional arrangements
- Governance and management of the MTP
- Code of conduct

The five CGIAR priorities approved at AGM05 form the basis for programmatic alignment among Centers. Presently Center focal points are working on all five priorities in order to make proposals for aligned and integrated programs.

The CORAF/WECARD and CGIAR Priorities have been reviewed in light of recent developments in Africa, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, NEPAD/CAADP and ECOWAS agricultural policies. Among the CORAF/WECARD priorities, three have been chosen for development of possible joint programs/integrated programs

The criteria for selecting integrated regional research programs that have been developed include:

- Potential for impact on poverty and food security
- Need for a critical mass of research capacity
- Comparative advantage of the CGIAR to contribute
- Complementarities and value addition to be achieved by integration, and
- Potential contribution to regional capacity

Centers have shared their planned research outputs for 2006-8 MTPs and these were aggregated by a consultant in order to guide further alignment. This exercise has enabled the participants to know what each Center is doing in the region. It also identified gaps and potential areas for achieving better synergies.

In summary,

- A zero draft MTP has been prepared.

- A framework for programmatic integration is in place.

- A governance model has been proposed for discussion by the Alliance Executive and Alliance Board in April 2006. CORAF/WECARD will play an important role.

- Finally, a road map has been established and agreed upon by the collaborating institutions to produce the draft MTP for comments by various stakeholders before it is submitted to the SC in June 2006.

Corporate Services Alignment

A number of important alignments are in place and more are planned. Today, the most important alignments consist of the following:

1. Samples of all of WARDA's germplasm are stored at IITA in Ibadan.

2. WARDA's outstations in Nigeria (Ibadan) and Tanzania (Dar es Salaam) are co-located with and administered by IITA. Except for the payroll for a few WARDA IRS, all other corporate services are handled by IITA on a cost-reimbursable basis, plus overheads (21.6%).

3. The other very important alignment is the temporary hosting of WARDA at the IITA Benin station. This collaboration is obviously very intense. In broad terms, it consists of three types of direct collaboration.
 - First: WARDA **rents** 22 offices to accommodate 36 staff in the areas of management, administration and physical plant services.

 - Second: WARDA **built** some additional facilities to house most of its scientific staff. Two greenhouses were converted into office and laboratory space. They accommodate 47 staff in 26 offices and 4 laboratories (biotechnology, pathology, physiology and genetic resources). In addition, the construction of a medium term storage genebank is underway, which will add another 486 sq. meters of facilities.

 - Third: IITA and WARDA **share** offices where staff of both Institutes provide a wide variety of scientific support and operational services. Both Institutes share an entomology insect rearing unit, a pathology lab, a soil chemistry lab, and GIS/biometrics services. On the services side, rather than duplicating efforts and

costs, the institutes share space and staff to handle travel, building maintenance, transport and vehicle maintenance, purchasing, stores, farm management, IT services (including Internet, phones and a satellite connection), meeting and conference facilities and several aspects of the publishing and printing functions. WARDA contributed to the sinking of an additional borehole for irrigation of trials on station.

Before implementing further alignments, some important considerations need to be taken into account.

1. Just as form follows substance, services should follow governance and program. As a clear picture emerges on consolidated governance and programmatic issues, corporate services will better understand the scope and size of services to be rendered.
2. An important distinction is to be made between policies and procedures on one hand, and the implementation or management of such policies, on the other. Common policies and procedures can be worked out with relative ease. Their day-to-day management will inevitably be more location specific.

WARDA and IITA will continue to discuss a number of candidate activities, which will be further refined as governance and programmatic issues develop.

Conclusion

With respect to the AGM05 decisions under caption,

“The governing bodies of IITA and WARDA should consider merger as an option and, if merger is not seen as viable option, provide an explanation to the CGIAR why it is not a viable option, including an analysis of other options for realignment”,

Both Centers are actively pursuing programmatic alignment, which is being addressed through the regional WCA MTP, there is goodwill in corporate services alignment and the Boards have taken steps in structural alignment as reported above. The others are being addressed through common Board membership, joint annual Executive Committee meetings and a number of corporate services arrangements, some already in place and some to be implemented in the near future. Thus a great deal of progress has been made in meeting the objectives of a merger

There is however strong political resistance to a merger as resolved by WARDA's Council of Ministers that “WARDA should maintain its identity and autonomy while strengthening its relationship with CGIAR Centers, including IITA.” Therefore the question arises as to whether the negative reactions to a merger would justify this step given the considerable progress that has already been made in achieving the purposes of an alignment and the relatively small additional benefits, which would be gained.

The Boards of IITA and WARDA note with some concern that the discussions on a merger have created substantial disruption for both Centers, have taken up significant time and resources and in

some instances have been a barrier to making significant progress on initiatives already undertaken.

Seeking a solution to this through negotiation between the two centers invites an increasingly acrimonious relationship, loss of the goodwill, which now exists and erosion of the considerable progress already made in programmatic and administrative alignment.

If the CGIAR continue to see deeper structural reform as a concept they wish to pursue, then a process towards a preferred option should be discussed with WARDA's Council of Ministers and the two Boards. We further agreed that since the two centers are scheduled to have EPMRs in 2007, that the reviews be the vehicle to determine as well as implement the process.

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